

March 4, 2009

Good Afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Johanna Chapman

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and thank you for allowing my brother and I to share our minutes.

I am here to speak about House Bill 6578. I am against repealing the death penalty because I believe that there must be personal responsibility in a civilized society. There must be appropriate consequences for one's own actions. The death penalty is not about revenge. The death penalty is about justice. And, justice is about enforcing consequences. Executing people for their actions, in my mind, is not murder. It is a consequence. Nor is it violence. It is a consequence for one's own action. To say otherwise is to abuse semantics.

If the Judiciary Committee is against a true 3 strikes law...one which would lock up forever, criminals who have committed and been convicted of 3 violent crimes.. And, if the Judiciary Committee is against pursuing the death penalty against criminals who have tortured, raped and murdered our loved ones...Just who is our Judiciary Committee protecting? Criminals? Just what is the state of CT for??? Criminal Rights??

What kind of message does this send? I know what kind of message this sends to me and my family. It says that the state of CT does not care about our safety. It says that the state of CT is more concerned about criminal rights than those of the victims and it says that the state of CT is soft on crime.

When criminals commit crimes which are so heinous and so horrendous...the state of CT goes to great lengths and expense to protect those criminals from themselves and from the general prison population.

Is the state budget crisis a reason to turn our backs on common sense and the safety of our citizens? In the Jan 2009 edition of the NH Advocate, supporters of abolishing the death penalty said, " Obviously, cost is not a reason to repeal it-but if that's what can get through to someone-why not?" (Ben Jones CNADP)

Well...I'll tell you why not. When we allow fiduciary interests to dominate common sense...we all lose.

Back in 2007, when the parole board decided that it was too expensive to get presentencing reports and sentencing transcripts...My brother Bill lost big time. He lost his wife Jennifer and

his two daughters, Hayley and Michaela. They lost their right to life. We all lost. We all got a life sentence.

We are a throw away society. When we see that something no longer works, we tend to throw it away. We are learning that this is harmful to our world and we are working on recycling and preserving to combat that harm. The death penalty in CT may not work efficiently. I appeal to you today...do not throw it away. The arguments to abolish the death penalty in CT are inane, insensitive and insulting to the citizens of CT. Instead...Do what the citizens of CT have elected you to do...work to fix it so that it does work efficiently. Work to restore the belief that our government in CT can keep us safe. Send us the message loud and clear that you do care about our safety.